

Update on Surface Transportation Reauthorization

9/22/2011

This is the latest developments regarding surface transportation reauthorization. House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica (R-Fla.) and Roads & Highways Subcommittee Chairman John "Jimmy" Duncan met with transportation interests today to convey a couple of messages.

1) Chairman Mica was pleased that the SAFETEA-LU extension runs for six months. He said that there was talk originally of extending the program just until the end of the year, but in the current economic climate you couldn't "keep people hanging." It was essential to give a degree of certainty to the states and businesses.

2) Second, he said that the larger issue of funding had been resolved. House leadership has told Mica to find the resources for a larger bill but it will not include an increase in the gas user fee.

Mica said that the FAA bill will be brought up in Oct. while simultaneously staff will be working on a 6-year surface transportation bill at approximately \$350 billion over 6 years. They have to find around \$100 billion in additional resources or, he said, about \$15 billion more annually. He has spoken to House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Camp (R-Mich.) about additional revenues but has been told he can go further than Camp to find more money.

Subcommittee Chairman Duncan said he was more optimistic than he had been in a long time about the possibility of passing a multi-year reauthorization bill in this Congress. He stressed the importance of the permit and environmental streamlining provisions of this bill.

Mica said he did not know exactly how they would deal with the infrastructure parts of the Obama jobs plan. He said he is not a fan of a national infrastructure bank, but there is agreement on TIFIA expansion.

Significantly, he said "This [reauthorization] is the jobs bill."

NSSGA will continue to work with Chairman Mica and Boxer through our grassroots to keep the drumbeat going for reauthorization. Our 100-Day Action Plan for Reauthorization will conclude at the end of this month. We are busy developing our action plan for the next six months. We cannot let down but must continue to keep the drumbeat going for reauthorization!

We will continue to keep you informed of developments.

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